

## IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 2, 5, and 6 without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter.

Please amend claim 1 as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) A water-based ink for inkjet printers, said water-based ink comprising at least a water-insoluble colorant, a block copolymer of a polyvinyl ether structure comprising at least one kind of hydrophilic segments each of which contains acidic groups and at least one kind of hydrophobic segments, water and an alkali, characterized in that;

said hydrophilic segments are carboxylic acid segments obtained by conducting hydrolysis after polymerization of ethyl 4-(2-vinyloxyethoxy) benzoate or 2-(ethoxycarbonyl) ethyl vinyl ether; and

~~the content M of said alkali satisfies the following equation:~~

$$A \leq M \leq (2 \times B)$$

~~wherein:~~

~~A is an amount of said alkali to be added to neutralize the acidic groups in said block copolymer for obtaining an infrared absorption intensity as low as 80% of an upper limit of infrared absorption intensity ascribed to ionic groups to be formed upon addition of an excess amount of said alkali to said block copolymer, and~~

~~B is a smallest amount of said alkali to be added to reach said upper limit of infrared absorption intensity~~

the content of said alkali is such that, when an upper limit of an infrared absorption intensity ascribed to ionic groups to be formed upon addition of said alkali to said block

copolymer is supposed to be 100% in terms of a relative infrared absorption intensity determined using as a standard an infrared absorption intensity ascribed to ether groups at 1,119 cm<sup>-1</sup>, it ranges from an amount sufficient to give 80% of the upper limit of the infrared absorption intensity to an amount not greater than twice as much as a smallest amount of said alkali that the infrared absorption intensity reaches the upper limit.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Previously Presented) A water-based ink according to claim 1, wherein said colorant is a pigment.

4. (Previously Presented) A water-based ink according to claim 1, wherein said colorant is a water-insoluble dye.

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Cancelled)